

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-03 ISO-00 INRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 FDRE-00

HEW-01 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01

SCSE-00 SWF-01 SCI-03 EB-03 COME-00 USIE-00 AGR-03

SIL-01 LAB-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 PM-03 NSC-07 SP-02 SS-14

L-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DRC-01 ARAE-00 /075 W

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O 081801Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8265

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

JCS

DIA

AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

COMUSARSO IMMEDIATE

COMUSAFSO IMMEDIATE

COMUSNAVSO IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 4294

STATE PASS AID/PHA/FDRC

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SUBJECT: HURRICANE FIFI - SITREP 22

REF: SITREP 21 (TEGUCIGALPA 4260)

1. AMBASSADOR FLEW TO NORTH COAST DISASTER AREA WITH THE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ARA/CEN ON MORING OF OCTOBER 5 AND

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RETURNED LATE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 6. VISIT EXTREMELY

USEFUL FOR GROUP IN EVALUATING ADDITIONAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY SEASONAL RAINS. FURTHERMORE VISIT PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR CONVERSATION WITH BANANA COMPANY OFFICIALS AND UNION LEADERS. SEPTELS ON CONVERSATIONS FOLLOW.

2. DURING HIS VISIT THE AMBASSADOR FOUND A CONTINUING SERIOUS FLOOD SITUATION. THE SULA AND AGUAN VALLEYS WERE STILL BADLY FLOODED AND WATERS WERE AGAIN RISING BECAUSE OF SUSTAINED RAINFALL. THE AREA IS SO COMPLETELY SATURATED BY EARLIER FLOODWATERS THAT THE NORMAL RAINFALL OF THE RAINY SEASON RESULTS IN ADDITIONAL FLOODING. UNITED FRUIT OFFICIALS INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT MEANINGFUL RECONDITIONING OF THE BANANA FIELDS WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE END OF THE RAINY SEASON WHICH NORMALLY ARRIVES IN NOVEMBER.

3. THE PAST WEEKEND'S RAINS AND HIGH WATERS CAUSED:

(A) THE COMPLETE ISOLATION OF LA MESA AIRPORT;
(B) THE WASHOUT OF A BRIDGE BETWEEN LA LIMA AND EL PROGRESO;
(C) THE CUTTING OF THE ROAD BETWEEN PUERTO CORTES AND SAN PEDRO SULA;
(D) THE DESTRUCTION OF ONE BAILEY BRIDGE ON THE OLD LA MESA AIRPORT APPROACH ROAD;
(E) THE DESTRUCTION OF THE APPROACHES OF THE TWO BRIDGES BETWEEN LA MESA AND SAN PEDRO SULA; AND
(F) THE FLOODING OF THE BACK COUNTRY ROADS WHICH HAS BEEN USED AS ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FROM LA MESA TO SAN PEDRO SULA WHEN THE BRIDGE APPROACHES WERE WASHED AWAY.

4. CITIES AND TOWNS ISOLATED OR BLOCKED FROM RECEIVING SUPPLIES BY ROAD INCLUDED LA LIMA, EL PROGRESO, PUERTO CORTES AND SAN PEDRO SULA. THE ONLY ROAD OPEN TO SAN PEDRO SULA WAS THE ONE FROM TEGUCIGALPA (AND GUATEMALA). TELA AND LA CEIBA WERE CUT OFF FROM INCOMING GOODS FROM PUERTO CORTES BUT COULD BE SUPPLIED BY SHIP. DUE TO WASHED OUT FORDS AND BRIDGES NO GASOLINE OR COOKING GAS WAS MOVING FROM PUERTO CORTES.

5. THE PHASE DOWN OF SOUTHCOM RELIEF ACTIVITIES WAS DELAYED BECAUSE OF ADDITIONAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY THIS NEW FLOODING. SUCH UNCLASSIFIED

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CONDITIONS INTERFERED WITH OR ELIMINATED THE LAND SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFF AND RELIEF SUPPLIES. CONSEQUENTLY FOUR UH-1H HELICOPTERS ARE IN SERVICE TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES. THE NEW HELICOPTER RELIEF STRATEGY IS TO LIFT HEAVIER LOADS ON LONGER TRIPS TO MORE CENTRAL SITES UNTIL ROAD NET REPAIRED.

6. MOST RECENT INFORMATION INDICATES THAT RAIN HAS STOPPED FALLING AND WATER ONCE AGAIN RECEDING. HOWEVER, LAND IN

AGUAN AND SULA VALLEYS IS SUPER-SATURATED AND ADDITIONAL RAINS WILL AGAIN RESULT IN FLOODING. VERY LARGE NUMBER OF DIKES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND RIVERS HAVE CARVED NEW CHANNELS. BRIDGES BETWEEN SAN PEDRO SULA AND LA MESA AIRPORT HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY REPAIRED.

7. CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ AND OTHER HIGH LEVEL GOH OFFICIALS ATTENDED A WORKING MEETING IN SAN PEDRO SULA ON OCTOBER 7 WITH CITY MAYOR HENRY HOLST. ALSO ATTENDING WERE MINFIN MANUEL ACOSTA BONILLA, FONMIN CESAR BATRES, ACTING PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER GERMAN APARICIO, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF PLANNING COUNCIL MANLIO MARTINEZ, AND SECOND MILITARY ZONE COMMANDER COLONEL MIGUEL ANGEL GARCIA. LOPEZ USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DENY PUBLICLY THAT THE MILITARY HAD MISAPPROPRIATED RELIEF SUPPLIES AND COMMENTED THAT COPEN, NOT THE MILITARY, WAS MANAGING THE RELIEF EFFORT. MINFIN BONILLA ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOH WOULD PROVIDE 180,000 LEMPIRAS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY WHICH WOULD BE USED TO DRILL 10 NEW WATER WELLS.

8. GENERAL ANASTASIO SOMOZA, PRESIDENT OF NICARAGUA, ARRIVED IN SAN PEDRO SULA OCTOBER 4 FOR A ONE DAY VISIT TO THE DISASTER SITE. HE WAS RECEIVED BY HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE GENERAL OSWALDO LOPEZ. SOMOZA GAVE LOPEZ CHECKS TOTALLING \$45,000 U.S. AS GIFTS OF THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT FOR USE IN THE RELIEF EFFORT.
SANCHEZ

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